

of years. We have a preposterous little historical organization which, when I was just out of Harvard and very ignorant, I joined. Fortunately I had enough good sense, or obstinacy, or something, to retain a subconscious belief that inasmuch as books were meant to be read, good books ought to be interesting, and the best books capable in addition of giving one a lift upward in some direction. After a while it dawned on me that all of the conscientious, industrious, painstaking little pedants, who would have been useful people in a rather small way if they had understood their own limitations, had become because of their conceit distinctly noxious. They solemnly believed that if there were only enough of them, and that if they only collected enough facts of all kinds and sorts, there would cease to be any need hereafter for great writers, great thinkers. They looked for instance at a conglomerate narrative history of America—a book which is either literature or science in the sense in which a second-rate cyclopedia is literature and science—as showing an 'advance' upon Francis Parkman—

Heaven save the mark! Each of them was a good enough day laborer, trundling his barrowful of bricks and worthy of his hire; so long as they saw themselves as they were they were worthy of all respect; but when they imagined that by their activity they rendered the work of an architect unnecessary, they became both absurd and mischievous.

\* Unfortunately with us it is these small men who do most of the historic teaching in the colleges.

They have  
done much real harm in preventing the  
development of  
students who might have a large grasp of  
what history  
should really be. They represent what is in  
itself the  
excellent revolt against superficiality and lack  
of research,  
but they have grown into the opposite and  
equally noxious  
belief that research is all in all, that  
accumulation of facts  
is everything, and that the ideal history of the  
future will  
consist not even of the work of one huge  
pedant but of a  
multitude of articles by a multitude of small  
pedants. They  
are honestly unconscious that all they are  
doing is to gather